

A
CHILD'S FIRST HOUR.
BY A PHYSICIAN.

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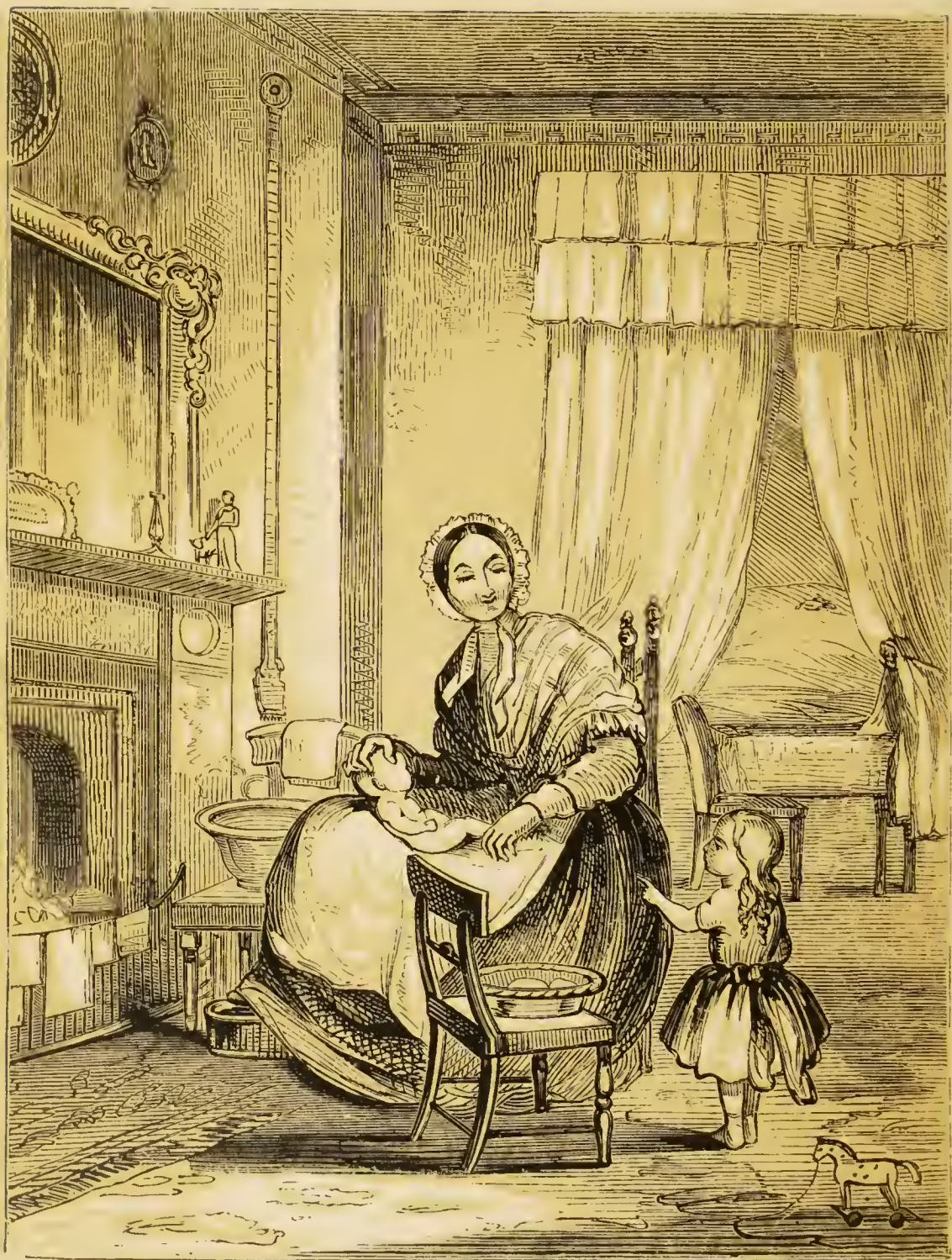
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Our Hero too, has witnessed with intense gratification and wonderment the washing and the dressing of the New Baby, and has forgotten his early troubles in the happy realisation of now possessing a live plaything —Page 70



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A

CHILD'S FIRST HOUR.

WITH

SUGGESTIONS FOR SOME ALTERATION IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF NEWLY-BORN INFANTS.

Addressed to Young Mothers.

BY A PHYSICIAN.

“ So bring me the precious Baby, Tilly,” said she, drawing a chair to the fire, “ and while I have it in my lap, here’s Mrs. Fielding, Tilly, will tell me all about THE MANAGEMENT OF BABIES, and put me right in twenty points where I’m as wrong as can be. Won’t you, Mrs. Fielding ?”—DICKENS’ *Cricket on the Hearth*.

LONDON :

ACKERMAN & CO., 96, STRAND.

1851.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages were written at the solicitation of an attached friend, that the Author would write a Book. The petitioner could not be persuaded to entertain any sympathy with the objection, that there was difficulty, as well as danger in the attempt, but could only see success in beholding the family name in print. Her moral courage in desiring to place the patronymick upon a title-page, was greater than her discretion. However, as there was no restriction as to subject, and the magnitude of the Book was not named, the Author thought he might venture upon a *brochure* of some fifty pages, and in return for the delicate compliment, give a little professional advice how they who *in futuro* rejoice in her name should be best treated, when starting upon their independent career.

The subject of Infant Management must be always interesting, from the deep anxiety which Mothers must naturally have to know how best “the ill to its flesh is heir to,” can be modified; and several excellent works have been written for their especial direction. The Author therefore saw no unoccupied ground for his observations, unless he dated them from a time not much dwelt upon by others; and as he thought some early troubles affecting Infants had been overlooked, he determined to begin at the very beginning of the Child’s existence, and to limit himself to the modest period of one hour.

And if, in these few pages, any Errors of Management be pointed out, and Children when those errors are corrected, obtain the advantage of a *better start* in life—the desirableness of which we are all most willing to acknowledge in our Adult-selves—or, which is the more important, any Young Mother be led to make further inquiry upon the subject, and by enlarging her store of knowledge gain an increase of comfort and happiness to Herself and Child, the object of the Author will be more than fulfilled.

London, 1851.

A CHILD'S FIRST HOUR.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we consider the extreme helplessness of an Infant at Birth, and consequently the great claim it has upon all our sympathies and care, we cannot but be deeply interested in any matter which affects its comfort and condition ; and as there are several incidents which happen to nearly all Infants at their earliest moments, and which I believe are productive of much discomfort to them, I propose to take these points into consideration ; and confidently trust, if it can be satisfactorily established, that the treatment to which they are subjected, though usual, is not only useless but injurious, that I shall gain many warm advocates for a change in the management of such helpless little mortals.

In attempting to do so, my desire is to make the subject both interesting and instructive without having recourse to professional detail; and I propose also to confine myself merely to the Child's History and Treatment in *the first hour of its birth*. A very short period—and it may be thought that the time and subject are not very pregnant with events, and hardly of sufficient importance to deserve a particular notice. But being a momentous Hour to the Child, and considering that its comfort or suffering, and the tranquillity or disquietude of the Mother are all so deeply concerned, I think an apology is unnecessary for devoting an especial attention to this brief period.

The numerous and admirable works written especially for Young Mothers upon the general management of Infants, render it unnecessary to add anything to what has already been so well and abundantly said. But whilst commenting on the treatment of Infants in their *First Hour*, I shall attempt to show that certain Practices to which they are then commonly subjected, are Hindrances rather than Helps to their well-doing. It is very desirable that little Children who have

their own spheres of enjoyment and difficulties, should be allowed to pursue the tenour of their way, obstructed by as few artificial impediments as possible ; and if it can be satisfactorily shewn that a certain routine to which they are liable, is not only unnecessary, but absurd and injurious, I think it will be agreed that it should be summarily abandoned, in spite of the influence of Prejudice in its favour.

Neither do I think that it will be difficult to point out the customary Mismanagement which prevails ; but to show the errors more clearly, it will be necessary, but not uninteresting to the inexperienced, to go somewhat into detail, and to criticise the usual attentions of the Nurse to her young charge as soon as it has entered upon its mundane existence.

My purpose also, whilst calling more particular attention to the Treatment of Infants at their earliest moments, is not to propose what should be further done for their comfort, but simply what should be *left undone* ; and to plead that certain Usages of the Lying-in room may be dispensed with as being not only quite unnecessary, but always disagreeable, and

at times, and not unfrequent either, productive of great pain and sorrow to the Child.

And to assist in the reformation, if it can be shown to be needed—which I presume it can be—I am desirous of creating an interest in the minds of all young married women, and all young thoughtful mothers, and to enlist them in opposing the objectionable practices.

I believe there is a fine field for action, if not for display in such a contest, and on such limited ground even, and if young women will but consent to unite, I feel assured they will be able to destroy an immense amount of Prejudice which is widely entertained in favour of these common errors. With such a compact entered into, I look upon victory as certain when the enemy is pointed out and a vigorous attack is made. But it will require a good amount of energy on the part of young and inexperienced married women to be quite successful, for Prejudice is a many-headed monster when in league with an antiquated habit. It will be no Quixotic expedition against an imaginary foe, but a common sense one against substantial absurdities; and the tribute so long and regularly paid to antiquated custom must be withheld.

But if to gain a complete victory over antiquated and absurd practices will require both watchfulness and perseverance, the reward will be proportionately valuable. Trophies will be won. And whilst penalties hitherto exacted from infants in deference to long usage will be evaded, acts of mercy may be registered in favour of those who join on behalf of the most helpless. And if such a combined prize as is here to be gained be not enough to stimulate young Mothers in their Child's behalf—which is not probable—I would add, that their own comfort is greatly involved in the issue of the contest.

Whilst alluding to the frequent Mismanagement of Infants, and the disagreeables, if nothing worse, to which they are exposed, it would be unjust if it were not acknowledged at the same time, that in the Lying-in room and Nursery the errors of practice have been greatly diminished within the last few years. The general extension of education, in addition to the excellent works addressed to young mothers, have made a vast change for the better. But, besides these causes in the mother, a portion of our venerable Monthly

Nurses have got a fair share of the result of improvement, and many of them are very able managers indeed. Still it must be confessed that though the improvement has been great, there yet remain many Nurses and many Mothers in considerable ignorance, and as antiquated in their practices as if nothing had been done.

I must also add, that I do not think in some of the works I have alluded to, that the objectionable Acts which it is the aim of these few pages principally to review, have sufficiently been pointed out, and the necessity for their removal dwelt upon. As an illustration, I will mention here, that a Writer, in speaking of one of the acts I propose should be abjured,—that of rubbing in Spirit on the Infant's head—says, “In this country (Ireland), where Whiskey is in universal use, the nurses generally employ a little of it for washing the child's head, under the *idea* that it prevents the taking of cold. This practice is certainly *not a necessary one* in ordinary cases, but at the same time it *does not appear* to be attended with any injurious consequences; and when we can say as much for any popular custom, it is as well to let people have their way.”

I have put in *italics* the strong points to which I wish to call attention, as I think such specious excuses can hardly justify the whiskey application. According to this author, although the practice “be not necessary,” and it “does not appear” to be hurtful, as he thinks, coupled with the valuable addition, that the old nurse has an “idea”—which is very doubtful—the Infant’s Head is very little considered because the process is not apparently injurious to it. No thought whatever is taken whether there may not be substituted for a real injury which *might* take place, a positive disagreeable sensation which always *does*. Nothing seems to satisfy the advocates for the whiskey friction that there is pain attending it, but the young Infant speaking out, or perhaps an external mark manifesting itself, and giving indisputable evidence that the application was not only not necessary but rather worse than useless. To let the Irish nurses “have their way” also, in this matter, because probably there may be a greater chance of correcting the other fancies to which they may be prone, and which are positively prejudicial, seems hardly fair to young Infants who have no voice in the subject, but are

mere passive recipients, and who should certainly be spared on that very account, all experiments, whether little or great, unless the benefit be pretty certain. I think all tender-hearted Mothers will agree that such a proposition is only just, and will doubt the propriety of allowing their Nurses to exercise their little fancies upon the understanding that they are to be opposed in magnificent matters. We all remember the story of the Wolf and the Kid, and the security the latter preserved by not permitting his wily enemy the slightest admission within doors. It is the only way of forming a compact against prejudice, by not letting her enter the field at all, or victory and trophies will be hard to be won.

I also think, that not only in the Spirit application, but in the other usages practised upon the Newly-born Infant, that hardly sufficient efforts have been made for their cessation. Recognised as being in the domain of the nurse, the Professional attendant often leaves them to her sole management and option ; but if these errors of management were pointed out to her *as* errors, I have no doubt that her amiable heart would be readily disposed to correct them, if her prepos-

session in their favour was not so remarkably strong, and she could be made to think whether her young charge was really any better for so much attention as she bestows upon it.

DIVISION OF SUBJECT.

THE customary management of the Child in its First Hour, allows of the time being divided into its four ordinary quarters, with AN ACT to each. And whilst I attempt to interest the inexperienced, I appeal for corroboration to the more knowing, when the Child's early History has been read, if it be not a very common one ; and if so, and its troubles are made out to be unnecessary, whether it be not worth while seriously to consider how they can be ameliorated, if not altogether avoided.

FIRST QUARTER, OR, ACT THE FIRST,
Refers particularly to the very common practice of rubbing an Infant's head with SPIRIT.

ACT THE SECOND,
To Dressing it with PINS.

ACT THE THIRD,

To giving it a little PHYSIC.

ACT THE FOURTH,

To giving it a little FOOD.

All of which are done in the Hour, and all of which I propose should be abjured.

This is the substance of the Infant's early history and treatment. But previous to entering upon it, it will be necessary to briefly consider the Nature of his Constitution, and to bear it in mind *continually* when we speak of his Treatment. Indeed, without being fully impressed with the importance of remembering the Child's Materials, the necessity for the great care in his early management does not appear. If he be looked upon as only flesh and blood, with the same constitution, though a little more delicate, than his seniors, he is not rightly estimated; and I believe it is from this wrong estimation of him, that he is exposed to treatment his early powers cannot bear, without injury.

Although possessing the same Organs as in maturer years, the whole structure of an Infant, at Birth, is essentially delicate, from its greater softness and want of consistency. The Brain itself, though large, is so soft as to be nearly a fluid, and is incapable of manifesting any mental act, except the desire for food, and the expression of bodily pain. But from its extreme delicacy of structure, it is susceptible to injury from the slightest causes ; and, indeed, it is a matter of wonder, how it escapes from being more frequently hurt, when we consider also the frailness of its bony covering. This is the condition of the Brain ; and the Organs of the external Senses, which derive their Nerves from a source so delicate, must, as we might presume would prevail, be very inefficient in their operations at this early moment. They become developed and active at various intervals ; but the Functions of all the Senses are most imperfect at the commencement of life.

The Eye soon loves to follow the light ; but, at first, the impressions made upon it are of a pas-

sive kind, and the will has no influence in directing it to that which is pleasing, or in avoiding what must be painful. Here, then, is a condition of one of its senses, which, on being understood, strikingly necessitates, on the part of the Nurse, to be watchful that the eye be not exposed to a dazzling light, as so powerful a stimulus to the delicate organ would be very injurious, and the Infant has no power to avoid it.

The sense of Hearing is as little exercised ; and very probably what sensitiveness to sounds the Infant possesses, arises as much from its nervous susceptibility to impressions of all kinds, and communicated to the brain from impulses made on the surface of its whole body, as upon the organ of the ear itself.

The other senses of Taste, Smell, and Touch, are as yet very imperfect, though it is probable the first two soon acquire considerable activity, and the taste in particular ; but the discrimination of flavours certainly does not exist, except to a very limited extent, in the newly-born child.

But, if the Functions of the Brain and the external sense be delayed for some time after birth,

before they acquire any activity, the *Sense of feeling* is born with the Child, and in a very exalted condition.

The Nerves which come from the Spine, and which are the nerves of Sensibility, are in a high state of activity in Infancy, and all impressions made upon them are acutely felt. The Organs, also, of circulation and respiration, as the Heart and Lungs, and the membrane which lines the throat and stomach, are all in the same state of activity and sensitiveness. Whilst in health, the pulse of the Adult beats about 72 ; and the number of respirations is from 14 to 18 in a minute ; in the Infant, the heart beats 120 to 140 times ; and the respirations are 35 to 40 times. There is also a most intimate sympathy and communication in all the Nerves supplying the different internal Organs, and also between the External and Internal parts, and impressions made upon the one are communicated to the other with great force and rapidity.

An able writer* has admirably expressed, in the following terms, the condition of a newly-born Infant, and which must be thoroughly comprehended :—

* FRANKSON.

“The General Sensibility of an Infant is acute, and the Nervous Susceptibility remarkable ; so that all impressions are violently felt, and sympathetic affections are presented in a very aggravated form, and are very prone to occur, constituting a peculiar feature in the infant constitution, which may emphatically be said to be *nervous*. The large endowment of nervous matter, and its peculiar susceptibility to impressions from the softness of its texture, appear to confer this quality, which [is never to be lost sight of in the treatment of infantile disease ;” and it may be as truly asserted, not only in disease, but in health, and especially in a Child’s First Moments.

This, then, is the state of an Infant at Birth, and which I have attempted to simplify, as I am particularly desirous of impressing it upon the minds of Young Mothers, in order that they may avoid, in their arduous and responsible trust, doing anything which may not be in harmony with the tenderness of the Child’s Constitution. It will enable them, when fully understood, to estimate properly the attention the child should receive, and to direct the nurse, who has the

superintendence—whilst they themselves are unable—to treat it with that care its condition claims.

To repeat,—and the tautology must be excused, in the importance of fully understanding the groundwork, — an “acute sensibility” and a “nervous susceptibility” are the properties of a Newly-born Infant, and which consequently entail upon it a readiness to be painfully acted upon by causes, which, when its now soft and tender frame has become of sterner materials, will not harm it.

This is its Nature. And with all its external senses in abeyance, and incapable of any mental manifestation whatever, except the instinct which prompts it to receive its food, and the tongue to cry its wants, the Author of its Being, for the assistance of this most helpless of living things, has blessed it with a Handmaid in the tender heart and the unbounded love of a Mother's feelings.

It is time now to proceed, and to mention those incidents to which the Infant, as I have said, is often subject; and though it be not in every Lying-in room happily, that the practices are adopted, yet there are, I believe, very few where *some one or other*, and very frequently *all* of them, are not in full force.

They may be thought by many to be of no great matter, and hardly worth consideration, as Little Children are seldom killed by any, or even all, of the proceedings; but as I believe they can be most momentous affairs to the young sufferers themselves, without any killing; and, moreover, not one of them is usually of the slightest value, but on the contrary, they are all hurtful and cruel, I think I may trust with confidence that some Young Advocates will be found to banish the practices.

The 'First Act' is the one which the Author who has been quoted considers may be permitted, because it does not "*seem*" to be injurious; but we will analyze it in order to ascertain if the Child be any better for the proceeding.

ACT THE FIRST.

WITHIN the first ten minutes of the Infant's natal moment, when he has hardly had time to recover the struggle for his very existence, and gather up his little strength—I speak this to the perfectly inexperienced—the Nurse commences her operations with washing the Child, and at the same time pours a little Brandy, Gin, or Whiskey, on the tender head of the young being, who now possesses, to the highest extent, that “nervous susceptibility” which is remarkable.

It is this application of a cold and rapidly evaporating Spirit to the young head, which constitutes the *first* penalty in the Infant's hour, and which I propose should be abjured.

The professed object of the practice is twofold: one, is to cleanse the head, and the other, to prevent the Child catching cold. And if it

were necessary for either purpose, there would be some excuse ; but as the cleansing can often be accomplished with warm water only, and nothing more is ever required than a little soap, it is not necessary on that score. Neither can it by any possibility prevent the Child taking cold, although the Irish nurse has a doubtful “idea” that it may ; but in opposition to her belief, there is every probability that the practice has a tendency to produce the very contrary result, and to give that which it is humanely intended to guard against.

With the assistance of the free rubbing with the Nurse’s hand—not always of the softest—the Spirit soon passes off, and an increased action, from the stimulus applied to the delicate skin, takes place. But the Child’s head is then, in all likelihood, in the very opposite condition ; and, from being very cold, has become unnaturally hot, to be again chilly when the heat has subsided. All this, I believe, has been a punishment to the Child, without the slightest advantage, beyond what might have been obtained by the warm water and a little soap. But in truth, the spirit cleanses the head a little quicker, so

the painful sensation has never once been considered. It does not "*seem*" to hurt, so the practice is allowed.

As the uselessness of the spirit friction has already been acknowledged by the quoted author, and who is an able writer, it is very desirable to come to a correct conclusion whether the operation be not sufficiently hurtful to call for its discontinuance. To ascertain the probable effect on the Infant's head, we therefore think it is as well to propose two or three experiments, and which can be easily performed, or when well considered only, their result may, perhaps, be left to common sense to determine.

Firstly, let the same amount of Spirit which the nurse uses, or a little Eau de Cologne, be poured suddenly and unexpectedly on the head of any one whose hair is thin, and question the patient if the process be particularly nice? Or ask any one who, when a School-boy, and the time came for his locks to be shortened, and his fond mother insisted upon a little Brandy being put on his head, to prevent his catching cold,—but which it never did,—ask him how he liked it, and if his head was not as cold as a stone for

some time after? I remember, as if it were but yesterday, the operation upon myself, and repudiated the proceeding when I got a will of my own. Or, which is better still, as a test of what the Baby's sensations were, let the same sudden and unexpected application be made on the head of a little Child about two years old, and who, besides a tongue to cry, has words to tell whether the trick be agreeable ; and though he comes much nearer to an Infant in his "susceptibilities," he is still very far from it. And if he does not like the shock it gives him, or the inward chill which runs through him, when he is two years old, how do you think he liked it when he was JUST BORN ?—when he was "acutely sensible" to everything, and his head was perfectly bald, or only covered with downy hair, and not as now with long ringlets ? You may depend upon it, the Cold Spirit was a torture to him, and nothing less : a real torture.

Lastly, to give a philosophical explanation of the effects of the Spirit, the evidence of Dr. Edwards is very valuable. He has ascertained that the temperature of an Infant at birth is from three to five degrees less than that of an Adult,

or its Mother. And, moreover, that the power of producing heat being now at its lowest point, a Child has less capability of resisting a diminution of its temperature than when older. The immediate effect, therefore, of even a small quantity of gin, or whiskey, poured over the bald head,—besides the shock it gives,—must be painfully chilling from the abstraction of so much heat in the evaporation, and at a time when its powers of reproducing it are at its minimum.

The Nurse's predilection, then, for performing the "first act" should be declined, if young Mothers are assured of its objections and its worthlessness. For, though the operation may not injure the Child for long, and ten thousand have been so rubbed without being killed, or even put into the slightest jeopardy by the proceeding, yet that it must certainly be disagreeable, if not painful, there cannot be a doubt, and without the smallest benefit accruing.

It is a fine opportunity, in objecting to the practice on the Infant, to win a Trophy from the nurse, and perhaps get an Act of Mercy recorded for saving the infliction of an unnecessary pain.

ACT THE SECOND.

AFTER the washing of the Infant, and the spirit friction, comes the Dressing; and in this operation is involved the "SECOND ACT," but which, though commonly performed, is not, it may be hoped, often attended with injury, as the infliction, when it does occur, is very severe, and has been known to be fatal.

The act consists in using PINS in the dressing, and when we consider how easily and severely an Infant may be injured by them, and how, in its passive and helpless condition, it has no means of telling of the infliction, excepting by its cry—and every one knows the difficulty of ascertaining *where* the Child is uncomfortable, or *why* it cries—it certainly ought not to be exposed to the danger of being so hurt by such formidable Weapons, if other means of dressing the Infant are equally efficient.

The fastening a Child's clothes with Strings requires a little more management, and gives a little more trouble ; but when we know they form a perfect security against accidents, I cannot but think, with the dextrous fingers, and an aptness at arrangement, which most, if not all young women possess, that the difficulty of substituting Strings is not insurmountable ; and when balanced against the Infant's preservation, dwindles to nothing.

In the using of Pins, the Nurse, whether she be antiquated or modern, cannot be held entirely responsible if an accident should happen, as the preparation of the clothes belongs to the Mother only, and the nurse uses them as she finds them. She has enough to answer for, without taking upon herself the omissions, not to say faults, of the Mistress ; and if weapons are put into her hands, though not intended to be used as such, yet an accident may happen, when every caution has been taken, and which may be then justly, and with some palliation, affirmed, arose from the absence of Strings.

I think, therefore, that in this arrangement, as indeed in all others, the Mamma must take upon

herself the greatest part of the responsibility. It only necessitates increased caution on her part, to look to everything Herself; and when selecting a nurse, to ascertain that she be capable and willing to carry out her wishes and intentions towards the Baby. If she delays her arrangements, or does not make known her plans, until incapacitated by being in bed, it will be too late to object, without considerable inconvenience, to anything the nurse may do, and sometimes quite impossible.

Whether, therefore, it be the “second act” of the Pins, or any of the other Acts of the Child’s First Hour, they should be anticipated and prepared for.

Sewing the Clothes on is another method of dressing; but to me, from the rapidity of the needle’s flying, there always appears risk in the operation, and it certainly requires able fingers and great care to do it successfully and without accident. It has this commendation, however, that it acknowledges the danger, and sees the objection to the Pinning-up of Infants, and in stepping out of the old routine of management, there is a probability, from the same forethought,

that the other penalties may become objects of consideration and reform.

I look, therefore, upon this slight change as a removal of one of the Stumbling-blocks from the Infant's path ; and trust it will not be attended with the disadvantage of placing another in the way.

ACT THE THIRD.

BUT the Infant seldom escapes the THIRD ACT ; and besides being more certain than the Spirituous friction, it is far worse, for it is a repeated transaction.

The *first* act is never twice performed, and the *second* may not be attended with pain necessarily, but there is always an encore to the *third* ; and sometimes it is a daily, or twice a day, or perhaps but once or twice a week ; but once begun, there is a certainty of a repetition.

It has at times the sanction of the Professional Attendant, but all the venerable Nurses insist that the new Child should have a little PHYSIC. This naked, red, and healthy Wonder, crying his best, and kicking his hardest when under process of yellow soaping, immediately he has been cleansed without, must be purified within. Poor little Child ! At this critical moment, with all his

“sensibilities,” and “susceptibilities,” he hasn’t a Friend in the world to plead against it, and save him from the threatened punishment.

The Nurse has expressed her wish to give him a little Oil, or *something*, and the Doctor says she may. But he says so because he does not like to oppose her; not that he thinks it absolutely necessary, but it is in her province if not her privilege to do it, and so he rather inconsiderately says, “she may.”

I am so sorry the Doctor did not refuse the “little oil” if he saw the slightest objection, for now that the nurse has his permission—since she has deigned to ask it—it is a dead certainty she will do it; it is what she always does, and not to do it she firmly believes would be very neglectful. The Baby is made quite secure, she thinks, when it has had its Dose, as there is nothing like moving the bowels. They form a great sewer, but which must be kept empty; and although the Child has taken nothing as yet, and the Mother’s First Milk would be the natural aperient, yet the nurse likes to be before-hand with what Nature has arranged, and anticipates her by giving something of her own selection. She

always does it and it seldom fails, and if it does it is very easy to give a little more. Too easy, by a great deal !

Of course poor Mamma is in bed very tired, and entrusts all to the nurse, and Papa is away at business, and her intelligent friend upon whom she so much depended couldn't come, and there is no Guardian Angel there. I am quite angry that the Doctor has said to the nurse, " she may," for he does not often do it, and now that he is going there is no help for it. It seems a pity too. For now the Baby is dressed, and looks so beautifully clean and nice, with its little black shining eyes, and face as red as paint. It seems a pity. And look ! it has got its fist, somehow or other, into its little mouth, and sucks away as if to put a stopper to the proposition of giving it " a little something."

Yet I fear the nurse has quite resolved upon doing it. But first she is going to take it to its Mamma to be looked at, and kissed, and blest, for it is everything to its Mamma. How I wish she would just say something about not giving the oil for the present, or express her wonder that it should be necessary, and ask the nurse

to wait, or if papa with his strong sense would come suddenly home, I am quite sure he would not allow it, and the physic would be stopped. I am surprised he does not, for his wife was very poorly when he left, and he might be of great use to the child. But everything is unfortunate, and there is no one to interfere for the Baby ; for the mother is a young mother, and this is her first Child, and there is nothing in her but Love. She knows nothing whatever, not the slightest in the world, about the laws of health and of an Infant's Constitution, or she might, in his very first hour, be of some service to him. But she has never been taught, and has never thought about it. And yet there is hardly any sacrifice she would not make to know what is best for it, and would as soon think of taking poison as of giving anything to harm her Baby.

If when she knew the likelihood of her becoming a Mother, within the last few months she had but have given some attention to the Laws of human existence, and have been somewhat prepared for the duties now fallen upon her, how happy for herself and child ! But unluckily she has not. She sings, plays, and dances well ;

has seen a good deal of society, and knows a good deal of the world as she thinks, but all that she has to depend upon *now* for the management of what she values more than all the world, is the prejudice and ignorance of an old woman.

A sad state of things, and an ignorance most decidedly blameable ; but it is too late to regret, and at present she sees no cause for such a feeling. She is quite unaware of her deficiency, but is brim-full of love for the Child and as full of confidence in the nurse, and dreams not but that all which is done is both right and proper.

So the Child has his first dose of Physic.

* * * * *

It's all over and it might have been worse ; Young Helpless took it too much better, and made fewer objections to his Physic than he will do when a School-boy some years hence. Indeed, I hardly saw him make a face about it, but to be sure I made a good many for him. He is not quite so high in my estimation now as he was ten minutes ago ; for I thought his bright eye promised more acuteness than to submit so patiently to his nasty dose. I made sure he would have had pluck enough to struggle against such villany, but he sucked it in as if he liked it.

'There is one comfort, thought I, it will give him the stomach-ache as sure as it is all down him, and there was a rare lot; and when I tell his father,—who made sure his Child would be something wonderful, and quite out of the common way,—I don't think he will get any commiseration in that quarter.

But it might have been worse, too, for the little fellow is but young, and indeed not above five and twenty or thirty minutes old at the most yet; and this is his first offence. And besides, too—for I had nearly forgotten his materials—he has little or no Taste at this very early hour. This is one of the Senses which is almost, if not quite, dormant in him. God has not given it him yet, but sent him into the world quite dependant upon others for selecting what is proper. How great the obligation then, to be just to such dependance! So the nurse might have given him any nauseous thing, and his Instinct—which is the whole of his possession—would have taught him to suck it.

Yes! it might have been worse too. For the old nurse might have given him a little Calomel, or Aloes, or Castor Oil, or Senna, or Manna, but

she had her own little ‘something’ to which she gave the preference, and there was nothing nicer or better, she said ; so she mixed a bit of Butter and Sugar, and warmed it in her own mouth, and called him a *precious* for quietly sucking it in. She did indeed. And I have seen it done fifty times when I was much younger and allowed it, and the thing is done every day now.

I trust, after this, Madam, as I have not over-drawn the picture, you will watch your nurse, or put your friend up to the proceeding.

Butter and Sugar are both very nice, but the Baby ought not to have had either, or *anything* at this time ; and the amalgamation done in that way was an abomination. I was quite sorry to witness it,

INTERLUDE.

It may not be out of place, at the conclusion of the third Act, to say a few words more upon the practice of giving an Infant *Physic* at the very moment of its birth.

It is certainly a very common proceeding, and must have had its origin, one would think, in the universal partiality which exists in this country for medicine of an aperient nature. However, whether it be so or not, the fact is certain, that though there is nothing in the Child's stomach and bowels but a little mucus, *and which Nature has made preparations for removing in the especial quality of the Mother's first milk*; yet, in opposition to this well known physiological fact, the Child usually has a dose of some aperient or other. Nothing of the kind takes place in the treatment of the young of all the

lower animals, nor among uncivilized nations, but everything is left to the provision which is established, and all is performed, it is believed, without any detriment to the young beings. But among ourselves the practice is different, and SHE who could make this most wonderful piece of work, a Newly-born Child, and give it vitality, is accused of sending it forth wanting a little *oil* to set it going. It seems very paradoxical, but the early dose of Physic necessitates the supposition that something of the kind is needed.

It has been said, in explanation for the necessity of a dose, that the constitution of the Mother is so much altered from the artificial condition in which she lives, or what may be called her civilized habits, that the Child wants a little stimulus from an aperient. If it be so, it should be shown where the difference consists sufficient to require it, as with many professional men who attend women in the highest circles—and such Mothers may be supposed to be living in the most artificial state—an objection is made to giving an Infant any Oil, or a bit of Butter and Sugar even, and the children do remarkably well without either. And if hundreds of such highly

civilized Infants do well without either, where is the necessity for giving the remaining thousands who are less civilized a little 'something,' as a matter of course, instead of waiting to see if circumstances arise to need anything, but which most rarely do ?

The fact is, it only requires a little more patience to wait and see the all sufficiency of Nature's arrangements, but from the morbid anxiety about the Child's bowels, it seems difficult to exercise it. The waiting is irksome, as it often is in many matters, and the Nurse's mind besides being strongly prejudiced in favour of a dose, is not formed of the materials requisite to withstand the desire to be doing something. The waiting, as I have said, is irksome, and the philosophical Pope thought so highly of the principle, that he says,

"To do, or suffer, may be nobly great,

But Nature's *mightiest effort* is, TO WAIT."

It is a condition of mind very difficult to attain sometimes, even in small matters; and besides the absence of it in our venerable friend the Nurse, the most intellectual and vigorous brains have at times wanted it to the great loss of the individual.

To fly from the subject for a few moments and exemplify the truth of the Poet's assertion—and which is so beautifully expressed—we will give two or three remarkable instances.

When the great Napoleon returned from Egypt, in 1799, covered with glory, and the French Directory, or Council of Five, was at that moment so unpopular that the Hero might have been appointed Dictator at once, and without difficulty, he refused to take any step to forward his appointment, because, as he said, “The pear was not ripe,” and showed, in the controlling of his strong ambition at this seductive and most important hour, the possession of a mind capable of making the ‘mightiest effort.’ He determined to wait: and as a consequence, his elevation to the rank of Chief Consul was rendered more certain. But in contrast, when the same vigorous intellect acted with impatience, or without this controlling power, and the Russian campaign was entered upon before the winter had passed, the consequences to himself and army were the most disastrous.

To give one more instance, we may mention another of the mightiest efforts, and which all can

well remember. We allude to the great battle of Waterloo, where our own Hero of a hundred fights had the courage and patience to wait the whole afternoon on that eventful day, and to submit to repeated attacks of the enemy without making any attempt to return them. At this 'pounding match,' as the Hero himself called it, nothing but the most determined courage and patience, gained the victory. The design was, to wait until the arrival of the Prussians would make an advance of the Allied forces towards the enemy in all probability successful. But no mind, except one under the strictest control, was capable of carrying out such a purpose, and submitting his soldiers for many hours, and under the most trying circumstances, only to defensive operations.

It is one of the finest instances registered in History of the power of *waiting*, which the Poet philosopher calls "Nature's mightiest effort."

"From the sublime to the ridiculous," the French Hero also said, "was but one step;" and there may not seem much analogy between the conditions of mind in these Heroes and that of our venerable Nurse; but in truth our Baby

simply suffered the penalty of her incapability of waiting ; and the same want of patience in thousands has established the usage of a little Physic, and which is now falsely imagined to be required.

Thus feeble minds in ignorance commenced the practice, and Prejudice and antiquated habit have continued it to the present hour.

When this same Child has become a man, and committed a hundred intemperate acts, we can readily understand why he should be anxious to fly to the Physician's help. But in the very commencement of his existence, when Nature sends him forth in her own image, pure, and undefiled, it cannot be but presumptuous to meddle with her functions ; and in then administering anything which creates the slightest irritation, a condition is obtained which is at perfect variance with the laws of health.

ACT THE FOURTH.

WELL ! you may suppose the Monthly Nurse has done all she thinks her duty by the Child, and that there is nothing more needed than to give it to its poor Mamma, and let her nestle it in her bosom.

What should she do but that ?

I gather from your question, that you do not know much about the proceedings of our Lying-in room, and are one of the inexperienced. Mamma is too tired at present, and not quite ready to receive it ; and to think the Nurse considers she has done everything for the Child which is required, would be unjust to her.

I like you to feel for poor Baby, who is in terrible hands ; and though he is not an hour old by some minutes, I am sure you will be shocked to hear there is more trouble in store for him.

His superintendent is going to play out the play with the FOURTH ACT, and will finish his short hour's performance with another real torture.

She rubbed his poor little bare head with a chilling Spirit in the first ten minutes, to prevent his catching cold, according to her theory. She next fixed on his dress with a host of Pins, at an imminent risk to his delicate flesh, but with the sanction of his inexperienced Mamma; and in thirty minutes from his birth, he had a Dose of Physic.

That is pretty well, I think, for a "susceptible" Child; and, if the Nurse goes on at that pace, it is not at all sure she will not make a tragic hero of him before her month's attentions are out; and unless a little luck turns up for him somewhere, I am quite sure she will.

If you will now watch the proceedings, you will perceive that the Nurse, as a prelude to the act, has just stirred something on the fire.

That is GRUEL—the renowned GRUEL.

It has been brewing some hours, and was put on when the other preparations, made for the reception of the Child, were commenced. The old woman knew he would be hungry directly he was born;

so she considerably anticipated his wants, by putting on a jorum to stew. Good old thoughtful soul ! She has prepared it a thousand times under the same interesting circumstances ; and indeed all she does is done with the exactitude of machinery. There is nothing forgotten ; and the Gruel especially, after the bit of Butter and Sugar, is her weakness. Her nature is abundantly kind ; but she is dreadfully cruel, only because she is ignorant, and not very clean in her habits ; but no one has ever troubled themselves to teach her otherwise ; and the whole of the antiquated class are as much alike as new pins, in their sick or lying-in-room practices.

If some one had taken the trouble years ago to make the old Nurse understand that a Child just born is *full* of nourishment, and will not want food for hours, what lots of discomfort would have ben saved to all the Infants she has had the management of !

Within a very short hour—to keep to dates—the Child was part and parcel of its Mother, drank of its own Mother's cup, and ate off its Mother's plate, and the two together were a happy and a wonderful unity.

How, then, can it be hungry ?

For months past, why has Mamma been drinking, upon the recommendation of her intelligent friend, a little more porter than usual ; and her cheeks were made to glow, and her happy heart to beat, when she was sily told it was for the Baby ? And so it was. And by the wonderful process of digestion, assimilation, and nutrition in Mamma, the Baby was fed and grew ; and when it was born, it was no more hungry than its Mamma now is ; nay, not so much, albeit she made a hearty breakfast this morning, and took an early dinner to-day ; and the Baby, I have no doubt, has had a fair share of both.

How, then, can it be hungry ?

Why it is as brimful of nourishment as an egg, and will not be hungry for hours, and hours, and hours to that. But you need not say so much to our old Nurse ; for she would tell you very plainly she didn't believe you. Moreover, if you told her such folly, she would probably think herself justified in doubting the next thing you said ; and then, in times of difficulty perhaps, she would not apply to you, but would,

upon her own responsibility, recommend a hundred injurious things for both Mother and Child, which, in her vast experience, she knows to be good. So that you see, in being too communicative to the old woman, and in opposing her without a good deal of judgment, you are likely to bring discredit upon yourself, and sad trouble upon the whole house. Leave matters, therefore, to be righted another way. But if you get a very antiquated Nurse into your Lying-in room, only be watchful she does not do *too much* for you and your Baby.

Remember that Nature, who is ever at your elbow, is a most capital Nurse, and always trying to serve you. Her operations may not be very apparent, and indeed you may be quite unconscious of her care ; but she is wonderfully active and true in her attentions, and only needs the intelligence of correct interpretation, and an action, on your part, in harmony with her efforts. She is then the most watchful, and the most untiring in the regulation of all the functions of your own and Child's physical organization. But she is doing still more. She is continually trying to correct the errors you commit, in act-

ing against the laws of your own being. She is befriending you, when you will not befriend yourself. Yes, such is the Handmaid who is ever near you, in sickness and in health ; and it is only when you commit errors innumerable, or some one of magnitude, which is beyond her powers of remediation, that she ceases her efforts.

The remedy, then, which is needed, to prevent falling into difficulties, is by the extention of information ; and that young women, to whom I dedicate these few pages, should be specially instructed, in some degree, in the Nature of the human Constitution, and the Laws by which its important functions are governed. This should be done before they become Mothers certainly, and before their deficiencies are so painfully felt. There is no great difficulty in learning all that is necessary ; and “ Combe, On the Management of Infancy,” is a most admirable work for guidance, in all which appertains to the subject. It requires but little attention to comprehend it fully, and when once mastered, young women

would be able to enter upon the duties of the Lying-in room and Nursery with an immense amount of saving in trouble and anxiety. Instead of being perfectly ignorant, and compelled to apply to their Nurses for the most ordinary information about the management of their Child, they would be able *to direct*, and would feel happy in their own capability.

Professional aid is not always at hand, and in illness, it often requires very considerable intelligence on the Mother's part, to carry out all the medical instructions ; and besides the great advantage to the Child, from her increased knowledge, her own anxieties and apprehensions, when there is no real cause for alarm, would be constantly and wonderfully lessened.

I am afraid we have sadly wandered from our Baby and the Nurse's performance ; but as she

has not quite finished her preparations for feeding him, we will take the opportunity of the few moments which offer, and contrast the opinion of a learned man with the vulgar one,—that a Newly-born Child is hungry, and must needs be fed.

Professor Jörg, who is connected with the Lying-in Hospital, at Leipzig, advises, that if the secretion of milk be not perfectly established in *two* or *three* days, that nothing should be given to the Infant, excepting a few tablespoonsful of lukewarm water, but that the smallest quantity of milk may be added, though it is not necessary.

If this hydropathic practice were at once proposed, in exchange for the nutritious regimen the Child is put upon with us, I fear there would not be much progress made in altering the present scale of diet. Such a sudden change would open the reformer to an accusation of both proving and professing too much; and the proposition would be regarded as so very chimerical and dangerous, that, in all probability, no notice whatever would be taken of such foreign and outlandish habits. And yet the principles of Pro-

fessor Jörg are in perfect harmony with the laws and condition of the Infant's system. There may be some difference of opinion, whether the Child should remain unfed *quite* as long as he proposes, or supported only with a little lukewarm water; but without denying the absolute truth of the Professor's statement, of this there is no doubt, that the system is full of nourishment, and of a very sustaining kind, and that the Child wants nothing but a long rest.

In the turmoil of being born, soaping, washing, rubbing dry, crying, and clothing,—not to mention the Brandy friction, and the bit of Butter and Sugar,—the Baby has had quite enough of it, and is very nearly used up. Though everything was done for him by the Nurse, and in her best manner, yet the exercise, from the multiplicity of things, was not of the most passive kind; and the little fellow and his “susceptibilities” would be very glad to go to bed, and sleep for some hours. And this is what he should do, but which unhappily he will not. It is not his fate. He has his trial to go through first; and the Nurse is quite ready for him, and he is ready for her, she says; so she places him horizontally

on his back, with his head on her left knee, when she has full command over him, and can pour the Gruel down the living funnel with the greatest ease. Not so fast as she would like, perhaps, for it is a slow process of necessity, from his tiny throat, but quite as fast as such a thick mess will go down without choking him. She knows the sign, too, when he has had enough; for then it will run out of his mouth back into the spoon, and he will be chock-full. Her intelligence, and her great experience especially—for she counts much upon her experience—tells her then is the time to stop.

But I prefer you to watch the proceeding yourself; for it is an interesting process, and I have seen the Tableau sufficiently often. And first, let me call your attention to the attitude of the little victim—for a victim he certainly is—and tell me if you think words can speak plainer than his position and pretty actions now do, that he is quite happy, and wants nothing more?

He has left off crying, and forgiven his Nurse for all his previous punishments, and now lies in her lap, with his face slightly raised, and

turned a little towards the fire—for he loves the warmth—and, with the thumb of his left hand well thrust into his mouth, he sucks, and sucks like a leech. He wants to get nothing out of it, but it is a comfort to him, and Nature taught him how to do it. We think but little of this simple act; and so far from sympathising with the Child, in the evident enjoyment it possesses, the act is often opposed, because the “trick,” as it is called, may become a habit. And yet, when we watch an Infant sucking its thumb, within a few moments only of its independent existence, there is something interesting in the consideration of Nature helping it to so much comfort, whilst in its very extremity of helplessness. More helpless, indeed, than the

“ Last scene of all

That ends its strange eventful history,

Its second childishness, and mere oblivion ;

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.”

More helpless than that even. And so in the exercise of the benevolent impulse, and with the assistance of its Guardian Spirit, and a little

luck, it gets its thumb into its mouth, and sucks like a leech.

That is what our Baby does, and it seems a pity to disturb him, though the Nurse does not think so. He would not suck his thumb like that if he were not hungry, she is quite sure ; so she places a napkin under his chin, and gets a teaspoonful of gruel ready, and with her left hand makes an attempt to remove his comfort. And though he raises his other little hand instinctively, with a jerk, as if to oppose her, she does not give him the benefit of the movement, and his thumb is withdrawn.

But the good soul does not give him the Gruel without caution—for she is very careful—so she tastes it herself, and finds it warm, and blows it, dabbles it with her lips, and blows it again, and then it is ready.

But the Baby is not quite so ready to receive it. His natural food is very unlike this thick artificial preparation ; and at this present moment, he has no internal promptings for nourishment of any kind. His stomach and bowels are full of *mucus*, and until Nature has removed it, which will take her some hours, his condition

is quite unadapted for the reception of anything. It was to remove this mucus, that the second act of a little "something" was given; but, as I have observed, the mother's first milk, after the Child has rested, is the material which Nature has prepared, and designed for the very purpose; and why should her operations be anticipated with nauseous physic? There is no reason, but the insufficient one, that it is an antiquated practice, and which, it is to be hoped, will soon be relinquished.

And now the Nurse, with great patience and perseverance,—after tempering the heat of every teaspoonful with her own lips,—has contrived to cram our Infant with a hearty meal of thick gruel, well sweetened, and Heaven only knows when he will be comfortable again. He has paid another heavy penalty to Prejudice and ignorant usage, and his young life is made uncomfortable, if not endangered, by so doing.

Before the mess was given, his stomach was contracted to the smallest size, but now is distended to the utmost. There cannot but be one result from the procedure. Nature is outraged and quite unequal to the task of digesting the

mass ; and the delicate Infant now commences his sufferings. The previous punishments are as nothing to this last act of the Nurse's attentions. Instead of passing it into a heavenly sleep, which the Child, in all probability, would have done, if not interfered with, he is restless from oppression, and soon begins to cry. Poor little fellow ! To be quieted, he is removed from the bed where he has been laid, and the Nurse places him on her lap before the fire, and lays him upon his stomach, and pats his back, and jolts him.* This stops his crying, of course, and at once, for he is physically unable to make a noise now, and all seems quiet again. And only seems ; for it would be quite absurd to suppose that such jogging can remove the sorrow the Child feels. It may add to his distress, and I have no doubt it does ; but as long as the jolts continue, he is still, from an inability to be otherwise ; and possibly he may pass into a heavy and apoplectic sleep ; but he soon wakes, and wakes in the same distressed condition—to be again jolted.

* It is the ordinary, and most successful mode of pacifying Infants.

Here is a sad commencement of the night ; and if the Child were not tampered with any more for twenty-four hours, the time would hardly suffice to get rid of the excess.

But something must be done to relieve him ; for the Nurse's lap, and the warm fire, and all the different positions in which she places him do not suffice. The old woman is very kind, very kind indeed ; and before she gives him anything from her medicine store, tries her very best ; and now upon her breast, and now upon her neck, she hushes him, but all to no purpose. There is nothing she can do to compensate him for the loss of his precious thumb ; and that would be of no comfort now, even if he thought of trying it.

How difficult to retrace ! But she sees no reason to wish to retrace. She thinks—if she thinks at all—that it is quite natural for the Child to cry, for all the children she is ever with, they all cry. And why should not our little child ? Why should he be favoured more than another ? To be sure, the old woman is very sorry—very sorry indeed—both for Mamma as well as the Baby, that he should make so

much noise, and be so uncomfortable ; but what can she do ? She will try something presently, if he does not get better, but hopes he will. And may hope in vain for a long time !

And now the mess of gruel, which has oppressed the Child from the very instant of taking it, now it has fermented, and the Child is worse rather than better. It has got, to use the language of the Nurse, it has got the “wind ;” and she decides upon giving it a little “something” at once. It is not a bit of Butter and Sugar this time, for that is never a repeated transaction, and only given on the Child’s introduction into life ; but she makes her selection out of a host of things she knows of. She is never at the slightest loss for a remedy ; and for the “wind,” perhaps she prefers a little spicy aromatic water, or a dose of Dalby’s Carminative, or a few drops of Gin : and possibly the stimulus, by inducing a sudden contraction of the stomach, may, in expelling the “wind,” expel the gruel at the same time. A happy thing if it does.

All this is a sad trouble to poor Baby, mind you, as well as to Mamma, and might all have been avoided. He is one of the many specimens

of the ignorance of the old Nurse; and if she does not kill him, as is very likely she will, it will be more owing to his good constitution than to anything else.

And in this way they pass the night. The Mamma has hardly had a wink of sleep, and is very unwell; for the Baby has been crying so much, and would not lay down, and the Nurse walked the room with him the whole night. Nothing seemed to do him any good. All was distress. They gave him gruel frequently,—and something for the “wind” very frequently,—and a little oil they gave him,—and the more they did, the worse he was,—and the Nurse thought the Child would have had a fit; and altogether, he was so very ill, that the old woman became alarmed, and as a last resource, she was anxious the Doctor should be sent for.

Such was the mischievous industry with which the poor Infant had been attended to through the live long night, that, when the Doctor did come, our poor Baby was well nigh lost to us; and if he had died in convulsions, he would have only done what thousands have done before him, from the same old woman's great attentions.

AFTERPIECE.

I FEEL very much disposed to add a few words more as an Afterpiece, to what was very nearly a small Tragedy, and to tell you how much better we all got on about twelve months after, when our Baby had a dear little sister born.

As a contrast, and some compensation for our late troubles, we will give the 'first hour' of our New Baby's life, and better still, Mamma's new picture.

Our Hero himself is a fine fellow now, and runs about, but he had a very narrow escape in the month whilst the old Nurse was there.

After the first terrible night with him, we thought from what the Doctor directed us to do, and what we should avoid, and the assistance of Mamma's intelligent friend who came to see us we thought we should have managed better with

him, but we did not succeed very capitally for some time. Mamma was made so ill from her restless and anxious night, that the Baby was removed into another room by himself, for it was necessary that her own room should be kept perfectly quiet, so she was not able to nurse him but very little for some time. And though her friend was very watchful, and would insist that the Baby should not have his food so thick nor so much at a time, yet Nurse was never happy but when she was doing something for him, and giving him either food, or oil, or something for the “wind ;” and Mamma’s friend was nearly sure she gave him something to quiet him when he cried so much. However, when Mamma got better, and there was no necessity to feed him any more, he improved a little, but it was not until after the old woman left that he became comfortable, and gave us all less trouble. We were glad when the time came for her leaving, for we were quite sure that Baby’s discomforts arose from her bad management ; and we found out for certain, too, that she sometimes gave him medicine to put him to sleep.

Mamma at first was angry, and cried very

much to think her precious Baby should have been so cruelly treated by the Nurse,* who dared to give him composing medicine ; but she soon forgave her, for Mamma was the most gentle tempered, and had the kindest heart in the world. And when she thought, after the Nurse had left, what a very uneducated old woman she was, and all that she did was done out of kindness but in ignorance, that perhaps she ought not to be so much blamed. Here was Mercy and Judgment. And in searching for extenuating circumstances in her favour, she remembered how often the Nurse had walked about the room for hours and hours to try and hush the Baby off to sleep, and how very tiring it must have been to herself as an old woman. She never seemed to think of trouble either, in many things which Mamma could call to mind ; and perhaps, too, she might not always have understood, for she was a little deaf. So the old Nurse not only got

* She was a faithful specimen of an antiquated monthly Nurse, but their numbers are considerably diminished. They are full of good intentions, but give themselves and their young charges lots of trouble from a false estimate of their duty.

a free pardon, but received a little present, I know.

But altogether it was a most capital lesson to Mamma, though purchased at so much anxiety to herself, and nearly lost her First-Born his life. She had bought her experience, but it profited her something in the future.

She began to think for herself, and question her friend also, who was very experienced,—and she knew what questions to ask now,—and to “read up” a little, and make up for lost time. And soon she knew something about the Organic Functions, and Secretions, and Nutrition, and particularly of an Infant's Constitution.

We have said there was nothing in her but Love and Accomplishments.

But twelve months time well spent have made a vast alteration in her. She did not want for sense with all her fond heart, and her capabilities have grown with the responsibilities and requirements of her new position. She felt it no sacrifice to give up some portion of society ; and indeed she had not the time, if she had the inclination.

There was so much to be done, that really, as

she said, what with the Baby,—and what would she do without him, I wonder?—and Papa always liking to come home so very early from business, and the house affairs, and picking up her book in the intervals, the day was not long enough.

As for her accomplishments, they were never so valuable ; for she could sing, play, and dance to the Baby, and capitally well too, and Papa danced, and her happiness was unbounded.

And now the time was approaching when the new Baby was expected, so Mamma provided herself with a new Nurse. Indeed it was wonderful to see the confidence with which she set about arranging matters for months previous, and looked to the event with the experience of a sage.

She who bitterly lamented her previous ignorance is now conscious, without vanity, that she understands how to protect her Child from over-officiousness at least, and has learnt also that there is no complexity in the management of an Infant's constitution. All is simple, she has learnt, when not disarranged ; and she feels, too, that in learning the Laws of Nature, and acting

in accordance with them, that in HER she has a helpmate, constant, true, and uniform in her works, beautiful in her adaptations, and wonderful in everything.

But whilst she has learnt to guard against officiousness, and to have some faint insight into the wonderful workings of the living machinery, and to comprehend the necessity of acting in harmony with Nature's Laws ; her intelligence has no less dictated the importance of guarding her against the acquisition of her own slight knowledge, and to beware of placing too great confidence in her own powers. Her increase of knowledge has created in her but an increase of watchfulness and care.

And at last the New Baby came, and a darling it was, though not a bit better than our Old Baby. Its eyes were not a bit brighter, nor its flesh less like a lobster from top to toe when the flanneling and yellow soaping were all over, and it cried as a Child should cry—heartily. It did it good ; for Nature prescribed it to develope its lungs ; and this was one of the many things which Mamma had learnt, so she loved to hear its first cry, for she knew it was right.

And, excepting the Guardian Angel, there was no kind of Spirit in the room ; but he was there now, decidedly. But for the brandy or whiskey, no one wanted any, and it was good for no one. It would have done harm to Mamma, and the new Nurse happily disliked everything of the kind, and the Infant, I need hardly say, was saved the friction on its tender head.

But for Pins, there seemed to be hundreds there, though not one to stick in the new Baby. They were better occupied, every one of them, and marshalled in order, and stood up on a large white cushion, and declared most triumphantly with their shining faces,

“ WELCOME, LITTLE STRANGER.”

It was capital, and I wouldn't have been so unjust as to have removed one of them from his rank, and taken away his privilege for ever so much. But indeed I should not have dared ; for they were all sacred, and no one thought of disturbing such a glorious phalanx.

And for Physic, the Doctor was not asked to give his reluctant consent this time to a “ little oil, or something.” For Mamma had learnt this

too, that medicine of any kind was not necessary, —that irritating the delicate structure of a Newly-Born Infant's stomach even with the mildest aperient could not but be in opposition to the Laws of its constitution. That circumstances might arise, and that soon, to require it; but that until the necessity appeared and the Doctor really saw the absolute need of it, it ought not to be given by any one. It was his province, she said, to study the properties of medicines, and their applicability in disease; and if he, with the observation and experience of a life-time, and with the acquired knowledge of others in addition, —if he continually found a difficulty in his inquiries and practice how the deviations from health could best be overcome, how could she, with nothing but a little book-knowledge and limited means of observation, expect to master so intricate an inquiry? She wisely resolved, indeed, she would never attempt it, whilst she had the advantage in living among those who could advise her better; for besides that the danger was too great, her moral obligation to her Child was also much too paramount to permit it.

If the machinery of life, as she had learnt, was

so unbounded in its arrangements, and the Principle which sets all in motion was so incomprehensible, what necessity did it create in her to avoid a wrong application to Nature's works ! What could her most limited knowledge accomplish when a living laboratory was the field of her experiments ? What though the Vital Principle, as she believed, did sometimes keep its hold to the tenement of human clay, when parts of it had already begun to submit to the decomposing Laws of Chemical agency, and to pass into elements for the formation of new existences ! But did not the Vital Cord sometimes, and not unfrequent either, as she had known, as suddenly break without an apparent cause, and prove the uncertainty of life's tenure ? And what though Nature's reparative powers in disease and in injury were a seeming wonder to all who watch her efforts—and are Wonders indeed, but to Her who is infinite in power—what lessons did all these convey but to be timid to enter into contest with such Sovereign Greatness, and to beware against doing wrong ?

This was the direction her thinking mind had

taken, and if she did but continue in such modest estimation of herself, and persevere to act upon such Principles, the promised Trophies seemed nearly all secured to her.

And many more things she had learnt in the last twelve months ; and especially about Clothing, and Ventilation, and Air, and Exercise, and Bathing, and various other matters, all deeply connected with the proper Management of Infancy. But to Feeding in particular she had paid great attention—for it was so much associated with the early troubles of her First-Born—and had come to the conclusion that Gruel, and Biscuit-powder, and Tops and Bottoms, and Arrowroot, and fifty other things were capital for a future time, but that not one of them was so well suited for a Newly-Born Infant as Milk and Water. She was quite sure of it, for that the cleverest writers, and the most able chemists had declared that Milk possessed in its composition *all* the elements which were necessary for supporting, and building up an Infant's frame. "It was the very model," Dr. Prout had said, "of what an alimentary substance should be—a kind of prototype, as it were, of nutritious materials in

general." But more, that in giving a little cow's Milk and Water, sweetened with the smallest quantity of sugar, a substitute was obtained which more resembled Human Milk than all the artificial preparations, and therefore *must* be best, and upon this an Infant might usually be fed for weeks. That asses', or goats' milk, with a little boiling water were also very excellent, and sometimes rather better she had read, though not so easy to procure, besides being much more expensive for little folks.

All this she had learnt from her little books and her intelligent friend; but moreover that these excellent substitutes were not to be given unless under some particular circumstances, and that a Wetnurse was the most natural and proper substitute for the loss of the Mother, and ought always to be obtained. No Mother she believed, could do her full duty by her Child, if she attempted to bring it up by hand; neither could she sympathize with some few Mammas either, who for convenience only, decline nursing. But for Herself, as she loved her Child too much to think of sparing trouble, or to consider it a sacrifice to keep a little more at home, she purposed devo-

ting herself to her Infant if no accidental circumstance prevailed to hinder her. She felt assured that by complying with Nature's arrangements, and constantly nourishing her Offspring from her own breast, that if it were possible it must become more endeared to her from such a bond of union; and that its own love would be established more closely, and every human tie between them be more firmly knit.

Our young Mother did not forget either, in the opinion of Dr. Prout, how valuable Milk was as a food for a child, what Professor Jörg and other clever men had said about the treatment of an Infant in its earlier hours, and that if the Mother's supply did not flow for *two* or even *three* days, that a few teaspoonfuls of lukewarm water were all that was necessary for its sustenance, till the natural supply did come. She did not intend to forget this, she would laughingly say, as she could bring up her Baby most economically at starting.

With such increase of knowledge her Lying-in room became a Paradise to what it once had been, and all that she had done to make it such,

was the simple observance of those Laws instituted for her government and use. It had cost her but little trouble to make herself acquainted with them, and there was no difficulty in putting in operation the Principles which the study of the Laws had taught her.

Thus our once inexperienced Mother has learnt the groundwork for becoming an experienced one, and the Sphere of her usefulness will soon be extended, for the Nursery and then the School-room will feel the full benefit of her enlarged mind. There will be no want of opportunities for exercising her increase of knowledge.

And whereas, though there were no Trophies of Mercy gained in the last competition, they were all won now, and in future times too would all be won to a certainty: and the increase of comfort and tranquillity to Mamma will be as great as to the Baby; and the Nurse will not this time, in all probability, be required "to walk the room the whole night." She will have her fair share of sleep, like the rest, it is hoped, and feel the full benefit in setting aside the Stumbling-blocks from the Infant's path. She

and Mamma together have abjured the FOUR Acts in the Child's First Hour, and all will be gainers by it.

And whilst the Guardian Angel, too, who is the Spirit of Observance to Nature's Laws—whilst He dwells in the Lying-in room there, or dwells elsewhere, there will be no fear of Penalties to be paid, but Rewards as abundant “as the gentle rain from Heaven” will come, and as constant and as sure as the Obedience is given. Such is the ordination of the Almighty.

We must now take a farewell, for the CHILD'S FIRST HOUR is expired.

And when the new Nurse had washed the new Baby, and dried it very carefully, and swathed it carefully, and abjured all Pins—except those in the ranks—and tied on all its little Clothes, and Mamma was sufficiently recovered, and quite ready to receive it,—what a happy feeling dwelt in all, and was acknowledged by all! And Mamma's thoughts reverted to the past, and the sad night; but now her fulness of joy and thankfulness were a sufficient recompense, and our Hero too who has witnessed with intense

gratification and wonderment, the washing and dressing of the new Baby, has been recompensed also ; and has forgotten his early troubles in the happy realization of now possessing a live plaything.

And, in conclusion, as our excellent new Nurse has expressed a wish that the room should be made perfectly quiet, we must say good night, and retire ; for Mamma is going to sleep she hopes, and Baby is already asleep, a happy thing, nestled all snug and warm in its Mother's bosom.

“ And there it lies, so tranquil, and beloved,
All that it hath of life with her is living ;
So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
And all unconscious of the joy 'tis giving.”

And so GOOD NIGHT.

THE END.

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